who the hell is Brandon Freels?

introduction by Hal Sirowitz

WHO THE HELL IS BRANDON FREELS?

a short fiction collection

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Small sections of this chapbook have been swiped from various pieces of respectable literature, newspaper articles, and other sources of the written word. Therefor making the following text pirated.

This chapbook is dedicated to the Unbearables

Introduction

The first time I met Brandon Freels I was struck by all the paint on his clothes. Sometimes an art student has the customary dot of paint on his/her shoes or pants, but Brandon had paint everywhere. And you'll also be struck by his intensity when you read his stories.

I consider him a younger version of Mark Leyner or a Richard Brautigan come back to life who keeps interrupting his stories in order to ask himself questions. His stories seem like they're written by a hit and run driver who has a conscience—he leaves some of them in the beginning only to go back to them later. I was never sure when the prose stopped & the poetry began, probably because they keep merging into each other.

These stories are about sexual tension, about trying to fit into society & having a tough time doing so, but most of all they're about a writer having the courage to work out his identity in front of his readers.

Freels interrupts his story about aliens to tell you that it's not true as if we didn't know that. His stories get more & more absurd. And while reading them I felt almost like an *Alice In Wonderland* who got lost in an alternate universe & had too much fun there to want to get out.

And when I was younger I wanted to watch horror movies, & get scared so I wouldn't have to remind myself that I was living at home. Freels' stories are like that. I find myself rereading them, because they seem to be the other side of reality & they distract me from what was bothering me & at other times they seem too true.

Hal Sirowitz
author of *Mother Said*

Fat And Sad

Hey, listen. Hey listen. Listen. Listen. Yeah, listen. Hey! Listen. Okay? Okay? Here it is! Ya got this? One day . . . you listening? See, yeah, I think she's gonna . . . You know, yeah. Yeah, see, you know, a lot of . . . you see, uh . . . oh yeah, yep, and . . . you know? So, you see this, yeah, yesterday, yeah . . . yesterday, you see . . . you know! Or something like that, you know, you know . . . Yeah? Yeah. I'm afraid . . . you know, just . . . Yeah. Well, no . . . see, no she's not, no see, it's just that . . . Yeah! And . . . you know. Yeah. So, you know I'm obviously concerned . . . yeah, you know . . . Uh-huh. Yeah. Yep. Uh-huh. What? Yeah. Oh yeah, I know, I know . . . like dynamite. No. No. I know. Yeah, that's not how it works. Nope. Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah. Basically yeah. I'm just . . . Yeah. Hmm . . . yeah. I'm just . . . You know. Yeah, for, uh-huh, yeah, for . . . Okay. Yeah.

•

At painting class . . . the tragedy . . . explosion . . . terror . . . someone had destroyed the art building! Sarah and I scrambled through the rubble only to find a doll and a very large abstract painting. We had to move fast or we would have missed the train.

•

Sarah, a painter in my painting class, told me when I asked her, well, here's how it went:

Me: "Who's a good painter?"
Her: "You're a good painter."

Later on the conversation grew a bit more intense:

Me: "I just think it's weird, you know, because I *knew* she was _____ (I'm talking about one of my teachers) but no one told me."
Her: "I think everyone is _____."
Me: "I don't."
Her: "You just wait and see, sooner or later you're going to get _____."

•

Sarah and I both attend an art class where we have both decided to become struggling bohemian painters, or at least I have. I don't want to put words in her mouth, but at least the two of us make a good pair.

When one of us is gone, missing from class, the other painters crap out questions like: "So where's your pal?" Or say stupid things like: "Looks like you're all alone tonight."

Sarah surprised me once in class with a painting of hers about when she had a nervous breakdown.

"Look," she said, "this is me having my nervous breakdown. This is me falling out of my car. This is Route 66. Look, this is a giant cactus."

The painting wasn't her best, and I believe she could have done better. She doesn't like it when I criticize her paintings.

"That cactus is as big as Pluto!"

Whenever I say something negative about her paintings she paints *me* in return.

Green wrists.
Green wrists.
Green wrists.

•

Sarah and I get off the train at a small suburban town. Everyone there is fat and sad.

•

My business card is in her purse. The card is made from card paper. The last time I checked it was pink with blue printed letters. My address, name, and phone number were presented within the letters. Fish swim in the purse like diamonds. The card, an old pro at disappearing, cramps back behind the leather.

•

"Nice place you have here."
"Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah."

I need her to tell me.

"Nice place you have here."
"Yeah, you know I . . . uhh . . ."

I am not a child. I am not a child.

"So, what do you do?"
"What, um . . . er . . . huh?"

Tell me. Tell me. Tell me.

"Are you okay?"
"I'm not feeling too good."

I want her to hold me.

"Nice place you have here."
"Uhh . . ."

I am inches away from her.

"Nice place you have here."
"I feel . . ."

I shouldn't be thinking.

•

The mayor of the small suburban town asks us about the train, the explosion, the abstract painting, and the doll. We know nothing. Out of anger he loads the train with dynamite. The suburbanites welcome this sacrifice. They take Sarah and I to a torture chamber full of rats. We both start to whimper.

•

Yesterday I got a telegram from my business card. It got lost between two sheets of metal. All it knows can't help it escape now.

•

Sarah pulls up in her television, and honks its horn. I jump into the back seat.
"Damned snow!" she says.
Her television needs maintenance.
We head down the highway full blast. I stick my head out the window. The air wipes away plastic tears.

•

Yeah, you know . . . yeah . . . I, you know, should stop . . . you know, about . . . you know. I have . . . well see, I have . . . I guess. Yeah. But how can I, you know, see, when just, see . . . you know. See . . . Yeah. Yep. Yeah, so I can see how the . . . you know . . . there's a lot of . . . you know. Uh-huh. Yeah. I hope, yeah . . . false . . . Yeah. My . . . yeah . . . see . . . Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah. Uh-huh. See, you know, get it . . . Yeah. Okay. They, yeah, no one, yeah, every really, you know . . . Yeah. Huh? Okay. Yeah okay. Uh-huh. Okay. See. Okay.

•

The suburbanites think Sarah and I are bank robbers. They torture us with whips, and make us eat baboon lungs. The mayor comes into the chamber and makes love to his wife in front of us.

•

Hello?

The Vampire Conventions

There were these vampire conventions you see . . . and a friend of mine had decided to take me to my first one. It was held at a small loft in southwest Portland. There were about seventy or eighty vampires there, and about ten or fifteen non-vampires like myself.

vampires
vampires are very very
sad
sad
sad

I saw one vampire whose head was shaved bald. She was really sexy. I saw another vampire wearing an old sixteenth century dress. She was really sexy too.

you can take them
they are
sorry

No one, except for my friend, talked to me at this convention. I didn't have a very good time.

you can use them
all up
their parents
abused
them

vam • pire (vam'pire) *n.* [Fr. < G. *vampire;* or Slav. orig.] **1.** Folklore, a corpse that comes alive at night and sucks the blood of sleeping persons **2.** a person who preys on others in a dishonest, evil, or wicked way **3.** a beautiful but wicked woman who seduces men and leads them to their ruin **4.** shortened form of VAMPIRE BAT - **vam'pir • ism** ***n.***

leather
corsets

The second vampire convention I attended was in Spokane, Washington. There was this small warehouse, and all these vampires piled into it . . . with the occasional non-vampires. It was a crazy sight to see all those vampires and non-vampires piled into such a small warehouse . . . the warehouse wasn't much bigger than my apartment.

and throw in
some
beads
white beads

This time I saw some vampires go into a trance. They started jumping all over the place. They were going mad. It was very entertaining.

don't be too messy
please
romeo

I even saw a few cowboys at this convention. There must have been a cowboy convention not too far away.

make sure
you
clean up
your mess
please

I saw a cowboy and a vampire making out near the entrance of the warehouse. I heard in my youth that vampires had a thing for cowboys but I never believed it . . . I tried not to stare.

thank you
very
much
have a wonderful
future

The third convention I attended was in northeast Portland. This convention was held in an apartment complex and had more vampires grouped together than any of the other conventions I'd been at, but there were also less non-vampires. In fact I think I was the only one.

vampires don't
usually mix
well with
peanut
butter

At this convention I saw a vampire soap opera in which one vampire stole another vampire from another vampire, who also happened to be a lesbian, and was really in love with the first vampire I mentioned. The show was very exciting.

anytime
anyplace
anywhere

I also saw the Devil at this convention, or at least I thought it was the Devil. It was just an impostor. No one was talking to him, because they all knew he was a fake. He was all alone. I'm sure if it was the real Devil he would have been swooned for autographs. That wasn't happening to this impostor.

vampires have serial numbers
tattooed on
their foreheads
and 112077 is one
and 123076 is
another

This was also the convention that I started talking to some of the vampires. I made a lot of friends. One vampire was talking to me, but the music was too loud for me to hear what he was saying. I just nodded my head. He just nodded his head too.

anytime
anyplace
anywhere

I was happy. I was finally being accepted.

Your Smile Is So Unusual

"Damn it!" I shouted, "How does this sound—Brian Shaw, 14, phoned his 27-year-old girlfriend Tara while his parents were out and told her that on the previous night he had been visited by Satan, who appeared in a dark red robe, with an erection, and demanded Shaw's ass!—end quote?"

This was my second news article. I had been officially a writer for the *King's Page* newspaper a week now and I was hoping this little tidbit about homosexual Satan worshipping would make me a star. I was to be famous around the entire kingdom.

"So what happened?" Jamie, the main editor of the *King's Page*, and an underweight lesbian, asked.

"Shaw killed himself with a .30-30 rifle," Whitney, the assistant editor of the *King's Page*, responded. "There is a growing satanic obsession among teenagers. Did you know that Brandon?"

"No I didn't know that. Tell me more."

"Well," Whitney hesitated, "I don't know that much about it because the subject is 'clouded' or something—is that your donut?—Oh, excuse me. The subject is 'clouded' or something by the super secrecy of satanic ritual."

"Don't fuckin' touch my donut."

Whitney was right. She was abso-fuckin-lutely, one hundred fuckin' percent, correctly right, and she fuckin' knew it!

"Don't you fuckin' touch my donut, bitch!"

"You're such a potty-mouth."

I had a vision: a large hand drawn pentagram! Was this the soul of Brian Shaw reaching out to me to tell his story straight?! I typed the article quicker, and quicker, and quicker! The letters and words came out dynamically in an analogous assemblage!

"What should I title it?" I asked Whitney and Jamie as they played with each other in the editorial chambers.

"Suicide and Satanism!" they both shouted.

"Hey, where's my donut?"

Dear Diary,

I'm so bent out of shape. I feel so disturbed. Maybe you could say I'm irritated, or enraged, or maybe frustrated. I guess I'm just blue, crummy, bummed out, etc. Heartbroken? Empty? Helpless? Disappointed? Yes, I am disappointed. I'm disappointed with this damn newspaper staff. They are so worthless. Maybe I'm just shy. I wish I was at ease. I wish I was optimistic. I wish I was safe. Everything seems so black and white (all-or-nothing) with this staff. I'm always breaking pencils (over-generalization) because of their stupid mistakes. The other day I broke a pencil and I got so mad I swear I could of killed one of them (mental filter) with it. Being one of the best writers on the newspaper staff doesn't mean shit (hidden

agenda). I should have moved to Minneapolis when I had the chance (the lost child). I feel like moving there right now, right this minute (emotional reasoning)! Everyone on the staff hates me. I blame myself. I'm such a jerk.

Love,
Brandon

—Do you feel miserable and sad?—

—Yes, sometimes.—

—Do you find it easy to do things around the kitchen like fixing Macaroni & Cheese?—

—No, not at all.—

—Do you get frightened or panicky often for no reason at all?—

—Yes, definitely, always.—

—Do you have weeping spells, or do you feel like having weeping spells?—

—Yes, of course, doesn't everyone?—

—Are you restless? Can you sit still?—

—No, never.—

—Do you get sleepy often?—

—No, I don't sleep much. When I'm lucky I get, maybe, possibly, two hours a week. I mean, two hours a night.—

—When out of the house, do you feel anxious?—

—Always.—

—Have you lost interest in things?—

—Yes, I believe so.—

—Are you more irritable than usual?—

—Yes, definitely.—

—Brandon, I think, according to this survey, you're depressed. I think you're suffering from depression, according to this survey, Brandon.—

—Nonsense!—

—Brandon, I think you're depressed.—

The first news article I ever wrote went something like this:

CHICAGO — He has been trashed so much by the media who can blame Dennis Rodman, the Chicago Bulls power forward, for rejecting reporters Friday night after he helped his team beat the Miami Heat with 16 rebounds, 12 points, and four steals?

"I've got nothing to say to you guys," Rodman told the crowd of on-looking media which included our own *King's Page* reporter Lids McDonald.

Rodman wouldn't talk about the hard-core porn film he co-directed with Houston Rockets guard Clyde Drexler entitled "Fantasy Basketball: I Love This Game."

While Rodman was tentative to speak about the film which has been floating around National Basketball Association (NBA) head offices the last few weeks and is set to be released to the public sometime near the playoffs, Drexler surely wasn't. "There's no doubt about it," Drexler said, "this is one hot and heavy flick. I recommend it for every fan of professional basketball."

Of the seven players featured in the film only three (Drexler, San Antonio's David Robinson, and Golden State's Jon Barry) were willing to talk about the film.

"It was just something to further my career," spoke Barry, who is in his third year in the NBA. "I'm not a chronic masturbator," Barry joked, "I just play one on T.V."

The other four players involved with the film (Phoenix's Kevin Johnson and John "Hot Rod" Williams, Cleveland's newly acquired guard Dan Marjele, and Rodman) would not comment on the film. It is suspected that the trade that sent Marjele from Phoenix to Cleveland for Williams early this season had something to do with the film. Reports out of Phoenix indicate that Marjele was disappointed with Johnson's performance of oral and anal intercourse, and that after the film was completed Marjele demanded to be traded.

NBA commissioner David Stern said fines would not be sent out until further investigation was done.

I am not a Betty (blonde hair, fake n' bake) I'll tell you that from the beginning. When I was in junior high I was hip: I attracted all the whores! I was the coolest 12-year-old that ever lived! But around this time I was more interested in the size of a girl's backpack than who she was inside that backpack. My girlfriend, Anna from Romania, was the biggest slut in the eighth grade (she was thirteen, a year older than me) and she had the biggest backpack too! "That's one big backpack," I told her, all excited. Her brother, a high school junior, took us on our first date, to see a Jean-Claude Van Damme movie! Oh boy! "Your smile is so unusual," Anna from Romania's brother told me. I blushed. Bar-coded bacteria covered the back seat of the car. Anna from Romania's brother was breathing down my neck. "Our father is a transsexual. Did Anna tell you that?" I ignored him. We were drinking mechanical cocktails when I noticed Jean-Claude Van Damme on the big screen. "He's got lots of muscles!" I told Anna from Romania. She smiled. We went to a big high school party later that night. I noticed that Anna from Romania was a very lucid dreamer, and she told me she considered herself part of the "Anti-Shock" establishment. After the party we went back to Anna from Romania's place to smoke a bowl of pain relievers. We got so loaded! Anna from Romania passed out on the couch. I asked her brother why he was "sitting on his head." He got all upset and started yelling and screaming and throwing things at me. He grabbed me by my waist and forced himself inside of me. He shoved my face into a bucket of bacteria. I was helpless. I ran all the way home and took a long and complex shower. The water saturated my sore and shaken body. Blood came out of my ass. That night I swore that if I ever saw that jerk again I'd give him the finger.

—Who are you talking to?—
—Albert.—
—There's no Albert on this newspaper staff!—

Dear Diary,

I met a woman today whose occupation is to be a "sexy" bus driver. She owns her own king-size bus! We met at a "How to Develop a Healthy Sexuality" class that I'm taking at the market (consent, equality, respect, trust, safety). I want sexual activity to be fun, nurturing, and a true expression of caring . . . she does too. So I guess her and I have something to talk about! We spoke after class about taking a "Stress Management" class together next month. I told her about how I have luck with getting free cans of soda out of the soda machine in the lounge where I work (the newspaper headquarters). She told me about how the King (the "King" of all people) had knighted her best friend last week. I always wanted to be a knight. Tonight we are going to a Mexican restaurant where they serve very small hamburgers. We are both hoping to avoid any cataclysms. I'm

going to pace myself. She is so beautiful. She reminds me of a cross between Julie Andrews (*Mary Poppins*, *The Sound of Music*), Gene Hackman (*Hoosiers*, *The Poseidon Adventure*), and Shelley Duvall (*The Shining*, *Popeye*). I am in love! She's picking me up at eight.

Love,
Brandon

—What are you doing?—

—Thinking.—

—Do you want me to leave you alone?—

—No, it wasn't a good thought anyway.—

—Did you know teenage suicide claims over five thousand lives a year? That number has tripled over the past thirty years.—

—Really?—

—Studies indicate an increasing rate of depression, and we know depression is associated, very loosely, with suicidal behavior.—

—Hey, besides, anyway, I've found that it's very common for adolescents, and even some pre-adolescents, to think about, threaten, and even attempt suicide. I've found that it's very common. I did a study and seventy-eight percent of the adolescents in the study had thoughts of attempting suicide. It's very common.—

—Do you think suicide prevention programs should be incorporated into high school curricula?—

—Unfortunately, sometimes adolescents are not agreeable to such programs, and programs as such may only make matters worse.—

—Why are all these hamburgers so small?—

—It's the restaurant.—

Note: In a survey performed last March by order of the King on suicide population it was found that the highest population of suicide discourse came from people who are currently working in or who formally worked in the adult film industry. According to the survey 9 out of every 10 adult film performers will have either threatened or attempted suicide within two months of their starting this highly dangerous career field. The second highest population of suicide discourse came, not surprisingly, from teenagers who are either chronic depressive or manic depressive (8 out of every 10). The third highest population of suicide discourse came from, interestingly enough, door-to-door salesmen (5 out of every 10).

"Do we have any stamps?" Whitney asked.

"A thousand," I bubbled.

I was hanging from a very large hammock full of spaghetti. Whitney had just walked in the room with a big bag of meatballs. She wanted the spaghetti and would have done anything to get it, even commit murder. I was eating the spaghetti.

"Where are they?" she asked, referring back to the stamps.

I think she was questioning my intelligence.

"In the closet," I belched.

She opened the closet and was smashed by at least forty thousand stamps. Jamie, with ten fish stacked on her head, walked into the room and saved Whitney from drowning by using a very large and almost dysfunctional fishing pole.

"Damn you, Brandon!" Jamie shouted.

"What?"

"Didn't you get my memo?"

I felt a tight pebble of static in my left ear lobe.

Jamie continued, "The suicide of 14-year-old Okocki Kiyoteru, a foreign exchange student from Japan who hung himself last night after leaving a lengthy note that detailed three weeks of bullying since he arrived here at the kingdom, has prompted a special press conference in which the King will be addressing the subjects of suicide, teen depression, the thrash/metal band Slayer, and acne! I *wanted* you to be there, at the press conference, to get some quotes, but what are you doing? Your sitting around here eating spaghetti!"

"I'm not a reporter," I explained with a pocket full of angst, "I'm just a writer!"

"What?" Whitney slapped herself, "I want that fuckin' spaghetti. Go to that fuckin' press conference now!"

I looked at Whitney. She had a huge fork. Her meatballs were splattered all about the floor, mixed together with forty thousand stamps. I was, of course, very intimidated. I watched her closely as the huge fork scratched against her right leg, causing drops of blood to mix with the stamps and meatballs. She didn't feel a thing. No pain for this woman! No emotion. This was a woman gone mad. This was a woman who knew what she wanted.

Out of fear I floated my way down from the hammock and onto the concrete floor of the newspaper headquarters. I lowered my head in shame. A yellow liquid oozed out from every opening on my body. I looked up at Whitney and I swear I saw the Devil standing beside her. She was no longer a woman, but a beast. I got up off the floor and, like the gentleman I am, offered Whitney the spaghetti.

This caused Whitney to crease a smile. She took Jamie by the hand and lead her to the editorial chambers. I stared at them: both happy, one fondling *my* spaghetti, and the other with ten fish stacked on her head.

I could only imagine what they were going to do in those editorial chambers. I could only imagine what they were going to do . . .

Republican Gangster Warfare

In the suburbs of Portland, Oregon, there are plenty of Republican gangs. These gangs, which are similar to the gangs of eastern Los Angeles, believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ: to punish the poor and bang asses with the rich. During my youth I was in one of these gangs, but only by default. The leader of the gang was Peter B, and Peter's mother and my mother were very tight, so Peter let me in the gang because he saw me as being some kind of brother, even if my views were primarily democratic. I was an oddball with an unusual complexion and big earrings. Of course my abnormalities bothered my gangster brothers. To them I wasn't "normal" so they feared me to be a homosexual. I took the vocal abuse daily: geek, freak, teenage whore! My Republican gangster brothers had three topics on their minds, twenty-four-seven: compromises, regrets, obsessions! When my sister won a hundred dollars with an Oregon lottery ticket my gangster brothers, my fellow gangster brothers, made her invest the money into the stock market. This was their way of "fucking her in" the gang . . . Steve B, another member of the gang and the captain of the high school basketball team, had kidnapped some "queens" from O'Bryant Square one evening and planned to do some fag-bashing! I wasn't invited because, after all, my fellow gangster brothers feared me to be a homosexual. "I'm not a homosexual," I told them, "I'm just a nice guy—that's it." They all looked at my ass. I walked off with my girlfriend Richard who was romantically rich and bought cars like crazy! Fag-bashing day it was at our conservative hide-out. People drove by the hide-out. The hide-out was disguised as a giant sock . . . Donald B, a tall, skinny, and handsome looking Republican, decided to actually—can you believe it—have a conversation with me! "Brandon!" He sat down at the table and started combing his hair with his fist! I was so excited I accidentally vomited on his lap! "I hate people who wear them big old legs." That's what he said to me. What the hell did he say to me?! What did he mean by "big old legs" anyway? He put his hand on my left inner thigh. "I can smell your kind two blocks away," I said to him. He thought I was being erotic so I socked him. Everything slowed down after that and I left . . . My girlfriend Richard was selected to be the junior homecoming princess and because I was her boyfriend I got to ride with her in a big convertible car all around campus! It was great! Richard looked a bit like Lené Hefner, a porn actress who's probably fucked more people than I've ever even talked to. Richard looked beautiful in her goldfish dress. I picked it out for her. "No! No! No!" said Peter B. He thought the dress was way to eclectic. "What are you two," he shouted at Richard and myself, "a bunch of bisexual swingers?" We didn't know how to respond. I was wearing a green tuxedo with the words "Fuck Me" tattooed onto my forehead. "That tattoo will take a hell of a long time, plenty of money, and lots of surgery to be removed," Donald B told me, "but I'm sure my mother can pay for the surgery. She runs her own fishery. Did you know that?" I ignored him. The babies were on parade! "Hey, cool!" Rich-

ard said. Then she left me for one of the babies. My fellow gangster brothers held me as I sobbed the loss of a very special person. Donald B held me close. Should I use the expression: "Do you have a pencil in your pocket?" or "Why is your dick so hard?" The latter, I decided, was not an option! I sobbed. I put my hands over my eyes. This created some kind of weird suction and I accidentally pulled both of my eyes right out of their sockets. I was very scared. Donald B took me to his house to put my eyes back into their sockets, but first he raped me and greased a fifty dollar bill in my pocket. That was the worst night of my entire life . . . The final installment of the Republican gang I belonged to came when we, my gangster brothers and I, decided to hijack a train full of democratic warthogs. This confused me too, I mean, what's a democratic warthog? It turned out that Frederick B, the gang member who was putting together this hijack, was a fucking undercover F.B.I. agent! We were all arrested. I was set free on the assumption that I was "far too liberal" to be involved with "Republican trash" or so said a news reporter from the Oregonian. The story was on their front page too! Everyone in the neighborhood hated me. They started throwing things at me. One old fart threatened to chop me up with his ax! I was depressed. I tried talking to Richard, but she was avoiding me. She told me so too! "I was trying to avoid you," she said. I was all alone. My friends were all rotting in jail. I went downtown to the local art museum and saw a painting of a family from the eighteen-hundreds. The little princess of the family was sticking her tongue out. The painting was very sexual, although the little princess hadn't heard much about sex yet. Was she me in another life? I thought to myself. I was very depressed. I purchased a red t-shirt that, in white plastered looking letters, read: "No One Likes Me."

Saturnine

1.

During my sophomore year in high school I was abducted by a group of extraterrestrials. They were the typical looking extraterrestrials: short, skinny, and green. This was not an unusual thing to happen, in fact around this time extraterrestrial abduction was a very common phenomena in my home town of Bend, Oregon. People who had astonishingly impressive vital statistics (blonde hair, blue eyes, German/Italian ancestry) like myself were abducted the majority of the time at a rate of one out of every five abductions. Each person that got abducted was sent to a different part of the universe to complete some odd task for the extraterrestrials. I was, disappointingly, sent to Iraq to observe the Pursian Gulf War. I was in Iraq for four days before the extraterrestrials transported me back to Bend.

2.

In 1270 an extraterrestrial spacecraft caught an anchor on a church steeple. A well dressed occupant of the ship clamored down a ladder to free the anchor. The well dressed occupant was apparently asphyxiated by the Earth's atmosphere. Everyone ran into the church and began to pray except for a group of old witches and some young and deviant knights. The group of old witches took the deceased occupant of the spacecraft and buried it under a picnic table near the church. The young and deviant knights stole the spacecraft and were never seen or heard from again. That was the day they discovered electricity. One of the knights was named Barbara.

3.

Being that I had to conduct a report for the extraterrestrials I kept a diary. When the extraterrestrials asked me for my report the diary was a good source of reference. I do condone the act of keeping a diary to everyone who is abducted, or in a similar situation. Diaries come in handy quite often. I kept a diary for all four days I was in Iraq. Here are the diary entries:

Day 1. The temperature extremes in Iraq are very hot in the day and cooler at night. The climate is a very hot and dry climate. The next four days I expect the weather to be very hot and dry. The typical terrain is a flat dry desert with not

much plant life. The animal life in Iraq is mostly humans, lizards, and camels. There isn't much plant life in Iraq. Heat exhaustion, sunburns, starvation, and sandstorms are the most likely hazards I must overcome in Iraq. There are basically no edible objects around me. I am watching the troops play cards today. They can't see me because I'm hiding under my ten gallon cowboy hat.

Day 2. Last night I had a dream that I was driving a pink, and very large car (possibly a GEO Storm with no brakes). My sister was on the hood of the car with a baby wheelchair. After I woke up I decide that the weather was nice enough to have an out-of-body experience. I wandered the desert in my spirit form for about twelve and a half hours.

Day 3. This afternoon I decided to go to the local Iraqi market. I was shopping for a gift to give to my girlfriend Heidi. I entered a large deli that was larger than any other deli I'd ever seen. It was the size of two oversized shot-down American bomber-jet airplanes. It *was* two oversized shot-down American bomber-jet airplanes! Everyone in the deli was American. "Do you want to buy any chocolate from the moon?" a small boy asked me. I ignored him and kept walking, past the protoplasm section, and straight into the butcher's large baboon arms. The butcher had a short interior soul from smoking too much marijuana as a child. He was eating a bucket of blonde hair when I placed my order: "Two shots of Hepatitis B, one shot of nezzaria gonorheae, and a bucket of human papiloma." The butcher was unable to get the nezzaria gonorheae, and the human papiloma, but the Hepatitis B was available. I had him ship the two shots of Hepatitis B to Heidi in Bend. "The shipment should get there by Christmas," the butcher told me.

Day 4. Early this morning I made a mountain of sand. This was so the extraterrestrials could spot me when they came to pick me up and return me back to my home town of Bend, Oregon. I stuck some artificial human limbs in the mountain so that if any humans saw the mountain they would think it to be just an ordinary pile of dead human bodies. An old farmer came down and told me to watch out for ten exploding Iraqi females. The extraterrestrials retrieved me two hours later.

My Vital Statistics!

Age: 15
Height: 6'1"
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Blue
Ancestry: German/Italian
Religion: Christian
Occupation(s): Student, Cowboy
Turn-ons: Space blankets, toilet paper, protoplasm, Advil, writing utensils, traveler's checks, credit cards, electricity, church, cowgirls, garage-door openers, and spontaneous human combustion.
Turn-offs: Depression, Kurt Vonnegut, zombies, old ladies, and nausea.
Pet Peeves: None
Hobbies: Riding horses, and performing out-of-body experiences.
Marital Status: Single

How To Have An Out-Of-Body Experience . . .

1. In a warm and dark room lie comfortably with your head pointed to the north. Remove all clothing and jewelry. Try not to be disturbed.
2. Breathe rhythmically with mouth slightly open. Relax your mind and body.
3. Pick an image and focus on it as you drift towards sleep. When you are half asleep concentrate on the blackness of your eyelids.
4. Focus on a point about a foot away from your forehead. Extend that point to a distance of six feet, and draw a line parallel to your own body using chalk or pastel. Focus on that parallel line and lift the chalk or pastel fragments a quarter inch above the surface of where you have drawn the line.
5. Gain control of your body's vibrations by guiding them through your body, from your head to your toes, and back again. When the vibrations are under your complete control you are ready to attempt separating your spirit form from your physical self.
6. Concentrate on the act of floating upward, and your spirit form should begin to float up from your body.
7. To return to your body simply focus on re-engaging with your physical self.

Some Facts!

Thirteen percent of all Americans have a history of problem drinking. Each year one in every four sexually active teenage girls gets a sexually transmitted disease for Christmas. Up to a quarter of teenagers engage in anal intercourse to avoid pregnancy, or to retain their virginity. In many parts of the world there are ancient rock drawings which show a remarkable similarity to astronauts in space suits. Behind the Sleeping Buddha of grotto 58 at Tun-huang there are various human figures, most of which seem to belong to unknown races while others resemble American Indians. Giuseppe de Mai, a resident of Naples in the year 1899, had two hearts in his body. Do you want to buy any chocolate from the moon?

What Really Happened In Iraq . . .

Okay, I have some confessions to make: what I wrote in my diary about Iraq isn't all completely true. The truth of the matter is that on the first day I *was* spotted by both the Iraqi troops and the U.S. troops, but neither of them seemed to care that I was stranded out in the middle of nowhere. On the second day I didn't really have a dream about my sister riding on the hood of a pink GEO Storm with, possibly, no brakes. I had a dream that I was driving a bus load of naked midgets. On the third day the butcher did have all three parts to my order (if you don't remember, the order was: two shots of Hepatitis B, one shot of nezzaria gonorheae, and a bucket of human papiloma), but if I would have bought and paid for all three parts of the order and had them delivered to my girlfriend Heidi in Bend, Oregon, I would have been unable to purchase the butcher's youngest daughter (whom I had shipped to my pal Stoop Olfson, an ex-car salesman now living in Paris, France). And on the fourth day I never did meet an old farmer, and he never did tell me to watch out for ten exploding Iraqi women, because the truth of the matter is that all Iraqi women, at one time or another, will explode.

And Just What Is "Saturnine" Anyway?

Many people may consider the word "saturnine" to be just a scab full of gibberish. I agree that the word does sound a bit odd, and possibly, maybe, pointless. But I assure you that it is not. "Saturnine" means many things:

People who are born on, or who are influenced socially by, the planet Saturn are often referred to as "saturnine." People who are gloomy or highly dispositioned are considered "saturnine." Lead poisoning in Europe is called "saturnine" as Romans were found to have related it to the word "poison." In Australia families and/or individuals who have impressive vital statistics are referred to as "saturnine."

The word "saturnine" can also be related to the words "saturnalia" (which means "orgy"), "saturnian" (which means "the golden reign of Saturn"), and "saturniid" (which means "large and noble family" or "strong-winged moths").

Exit . . .

When I was returned to Bend I found that my high school had gone through an interesting transformation. During my time in Iraq the school had been split into two parties: The Flat Earth Club, and the The Hollow Earth Club. Each club contained their own philosophy on how the Earth is shaped. The Flat Earth Club argued that the Earth is nothing more than a flat board of dirt and wood covered with a few lakes and so forth. The Hollow Earth Club believed that the Earth is hollow and that there are two entrances to the center of the Earth: one at the North Pole and another at the South Pole. According to The Hollow Earth Club another race of human beings lives inside of the Earth and those humans "most likely have resources that we, also as human beings, will eventually need someday."

Upon my arrival home I was elected the leader of a new, yet unknown, party: The Z.S. 12 Club. We believed in the teachings of Zecharia Sitchin and memorized passages from his book *The Twelfth Planet*. We were a very secret party. The other two parties, and most of the school, had no idea that we even existed.

No Offensive Odor

The body of the dinosaur fit into the airplane-sized hole almost perfectly. We had dug the hole in the park. The entire neighborhood helped out a little. And then it was time to bury the dinosaur. We expected the burial to last about three hours, after all, it's not a small task to bury a dinosaur. Shovels were surprisingly supplied by the local hardware store. And once the burial was complete we were *planning* to say our prayers to the dinosaur gods and be done with it, but things didn't go the way we planned.

Jorge and I were running the event. We thought it would be a good thing for the neighborhood . . . to get people involved, and besides, everyone loved the dinosaur. We were all saddened by its passing.

An hour into the burial is when things got out of control. The commissioner disagreed with our operation.

"This," he said, "will pollute our lovely park!"

He was saying this to Jorge and I.

"Pollution!" he shouted, "You polluters, letting these children see this!"

Did I tell you there were children helping with the burial?

"But commissioner," Jorge questioned, "is it not true that an early exposure to death will therefor increase a child's ability to understand life?"

"No," the commissioner said, straight faced.

Of course, I knew what was going on.

"You're just mad because your daughter's a whore!" I spat all over the commissioner's shoes.

Jorge and I both had beautiful daughters. They were no whores. The commissioner was just jealous. His daughter had been with everyone in town, including Jorge, Jorge's wife, and my grandfather. The commissioner ran off to his car disgruntled. We continued the burial.

Flashback Scene:

You could bounce on 'um and that's just what
we did . . .
we bounced on 'um.
Jorge got going up really high and he almost
hit his head on the ceiling.
I called to him,
"Hey, Jorge, watch out for the ceiling!"
He heard me just in time, but
the commissioner was another story . . .
the commissioner went crashing
into the ceiling and
smashed his head right through . . .

right into his parent's bedroom. He was stuck
hanging there, screaming out to us:
"Hey you guys, get me down. Quick!
Get me down before my parents get home!"
We just ignored him and kept on bouncing.
"Isn't today a lovely day?"
I said to Jorge.
"Why yes, today is kind of nice . . ."
Jorge said back.
The commissioner just sat there with his head
stuck in the ceiling screaming at us,
"Come on guys! Come on!
My parents will be home any minute!"
We didn't get him down.
We never did.

The dinosaur was a brontosaurus. We used it for mass transit. Of course, after the magic armadillos died back in '76 we knew the dinosaur would be overworked, but no one really understood what kind of impact being overworked was going to have on the dinosaur until it was too late.

I don't know what the medical term is for how the dinosaur died, but I'm sure there is one.

The burial was almost completed when the commissioner returned with a large amount of police officers.

"This burial is closed," he shouted.

This made the children frantic.

"Don't you see what you're doing!" I thought to myself. I wanted to shout those words to the commissioner, but they just didn't come out.

Everything was going haywire, at least frantic children can make things seem like they're going haywire.

Then, suddenly, a fire fight broke out.

Action Scene:

Jorge gathered the children together in the
airplane-sized hole with the body
of the dinosaur.
There wasn't much room in the hole
because the dinosaur was so big.
I pulled out my pocket knife
and headed for the commissioner.
Jorge and the children cheered me on.
I had been transformed
into an action hero.
I was dodging bullets, jumping trains,
racing buildings.
To the police this was very frightening.

To me this was very exciting.
The commissioner
ran for his car . . .
I was almost there . . .
Just about there . . .
Almost . . .
Just . . .
Barely . . .
But that's when I blacked out.

What happened? Who was I? What was going on? How did I get there? Where was my wife? Where was my daughter? What was happening? What was going on?

Jorge came to visit me at the hospital a week later.

"Come on, you old fart," he said, "we've got to go catch a new dinosaur!"

Madhouse Gibberish Blues

Information

PERSON
Johnny Running-Bull

PLACE
Oak Grove, Oregon; Oak Grove Mental Health Department

OTHER
Etc.

A Letter

Dear Ma'am,

According to staff evaluation we have come to the conclusion that your son is not capable of functioning in society properly. Without a doubt if he is subjected to society at this point in time he will end up hurting either himself, or someone else. Throughout the interview he exhibited signs of depression and confusion. His literature, that you so kindly gave to us, only supported our beliefs. For example, his poem "Goldfish-A-Go-Go" shows us his sense of regret and sensitivity: "Everyone was jumping around, singing and / dancing at the Goldfish-A-Go-Go. / Goldfish guts were splattered all about the floor. / I bent down to pick up a baby goldfish in distress. / It was crying for its mother and father . . ." And then there is the sample text from his poem "Walk" which frightened everyone here at the mental health department: "Sometimes when I gaze up at girls / while they're walking down the street, / they get all upset! / 'Stop looking at me!' they shout. / 'He won't eat you,' my father tells them." It is fairly obvious to us that your son is in need of serious medical attention. We will keep him here at the mental health department until we feel he is capable of living in society safely. More information on this subject, including a brochure, will be arriving in your mailbox soon.

with regards,
Dr. Jacob McCaffery

A Short History Of Johnny Running-Bull (Part One)

It was the year *Return Of The Jedi* was flying across movie screens. Johnny Running-Bull had seen the movie twelve (12) times. He didn't want to miss a thing. His popcorn was full of Luke Skywalker. His Pepsi bubbled with the princess. Captain Solo was in his underwear watering flowers. Johnny Running-Bull had to watch the entire movie again . . . for the thirteenth (13) time, even if it killed him. The movie flicked against Darth Vader's leather backside. Johnny Running-Bull was having a very good time.

Questions

Have you ever gone hang gliding, sky diving, bungee jumping, surfing, wind surfing, scuba diving, white water rafting, or mountain climbing? Have you ever set a sports record, run a marathon, been a pro athlete, or competed in a sports event seen by more than 1,000 fans? Have you ever piloted an airplane, or a helicopter, or a hot-air balloon? Have you ever stowed away on a boat, or a plane, or a train? Have you ever hiked or biked more than 100 miles at one time? Have you ever sailed on a solo ocean voyage, or learned to speak a foreign language fluently? Have you ever seen a ghost or a UFO? Have you ever been a member of a cult, or had any profound religious experiences? Do you have an evil twin? Have you ever died, then returned to your body? Have you ever communicated with a non-human life form? Do you have ESP or any other psychic powers? Do you believe in God?

Conversation With Johnny Running-Bull

JOHNNY

. . .

MYSELF

And I was in love with an older woman. She worked at a diner in northeast Portland. Actually, she wasn't older than me, just more mature.

JOHNNY

. . .

MYSELF

And she was beautiful. I met her at a funeral. We hit it off immediately. We both knew the deceased so we had a lot to talk about. She still had romantic feelings for the deceased so I comforted her, after all, the deceased was my best friend.

JOHNNY

. . .

MYSELF

And then she started getting sick, perverted. She wanted to do all this S&M type of stuff. I wanted to do it too, but I would never have admitted that to her. A month

after we started getting serious about our relationship she died of an aspirin overdose. I blame myself. I should have seen it coming. I wish I could have said goodbye.

JOHNNY

. . .

A Short History Of Johnny Running-Bull (Part Two)

On the first day of school Johnny Running-Bull was singled out. Being the only American Indian in the school he was, of course, the first one to see the dancing buffalo. The buffalo were naked, and doing perverse sexual dances in the center of the cafeteria. People walked right by the buffalo, often leaving bombs of electricity by accident. The buffalo were Johnny's secret. He was happy. He decided he wasn't going to commit suicide anytime soon.

More Questions

Have you ever won more than $10,000 in a lottery or bet? Have you ever been extremely rich? Have you ever been homeless? Have you ever been the subject of a newspaper story or magazine story? Have you ever phoned a radio talk show, or been on television? Have you ever performed on a stage before more than 1,000 people? Have you ever cut a record or written a book? Have you ever invented or discovered something, or had something named after you? Have you ever been close friends with someone famous? Have you ever survived a plane crash, a ship wreck, a train wreck, or an automobile accident? Have you ever survived a hurricane, tornado, earthquake, or flood? Have you ever been arrested?

Selection From An Untitled Johnny Running-Bull Novel

Mission 31: We surrounded the church. We knew the goldfish was inside. The Captain had ordered us to apprehend the goldfish which was inside the church. I looked in the window. I could see the goldfish, its yellow scales, as bright as a wedding dress. My anger grew. "Oh the humanity!" the Captain shouted. I kicked down the church doors.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

What the hell was I doing? I love goldfish. Goldfish are my life. Goldfish are profit. No goldfish, no cashola! That's just the way it is. I need goldfish. Do you think I want to starve?! I'm not that crazy, or that stupid . . . My wife came out of the church. My wife was an hourglass. She was carrying the dead goldfish! "Agh! Biff!" is all the Captain could say. I put my Gat in my pants. For a moment there I looked like John Wayne. My wife and I ate the goldfish raw in front of the entire platoon. Is this really what I want to do with the rest of my life?

A Short History Of Johnny Running-Bull (Part Three)

The bathroom was invaded; Johnny Running-Bull was using the toilet at the time. The choir began to sing. He quickly built a tower out of ten thousand (10,000) buckets of toilet paper.

Again, Questions

Have you ever killed someone? Have you ever been in a high-speed chase? Have you ever had an illicit affair? Have you ever visited a nude beach or nudist colony, or appeared nude in public? Did you drop out of high school? Have you ever given birth? Have you ever used dangerous or illegal drugs? Have you ever been in a gang, crime family or outlaw group?

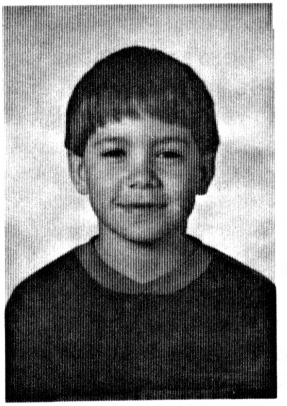
A Short History Of Johnny Running-Bull (Part Four)

Johnny Running-Bull barked out the idea of shaving his head as he gazed into a four way mirror. That night he did it, he shaved all his hair off. He looked cool. He looked like a god. He looked evil. He looked very satanic. That's how cool he looked. He was happy. The next night he went to a party and all they did was play some stupid and god-damned Nirvana song (those bastards) over and over again! The song went something like this: "I'm so lonely, but that's okay I shave my head and I'm not sad." Johnny went home, put his head down on his pillow, and cried.

One Last Question

Are you now, or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

Brandon Freels is a writer who lives in Milwaukie, Oregon. He has published one collection of poetry, *Bovine Syndrome* (Mr. Puke Press, 1995), and another, *The Lost Writings of a Teenage Freak-O Path* is forthcoming. His poetry and prose has appeared in numerous publications across the United States of America including magazines such as *American Writing*, *Beet*, *Blank Gun Silencer*, *Caffeine*, and *Flipside*.



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